

## BRIEFER ARTICLES.

Notes upon *Tradescantia micrantha*.—*With Plate XX*.—I have been much interested in the rediscovery of this pretty little spiderwort. Although not uncommon in its native haunts it was not collected again for forty years after its discovery. Until recently it has not been represented in any of our larger herbaria except by the single type specimen in the Torrey herbarium at Columbia College.

The history of the plant is as follows: A single specimen was collected about 1854 near the mouth of the Rio Grande by A. Schott, who was then one of the collectors of the Mexican Boundary Survey. In 1859 it was described by Dr. John Torrey in the Report of the Mexican Boundary Survey. All the descriptions since then have been based on this short account. The plant was rediscovered by A. A. Heller at Corpus Christi, Texas, in the spring of 1894. He wrote me that the plant was very plentiful near the Oso, growing among and under thorny bushes. Only a very few specimens were obtained owing to the difficulty of getting at the plants. The material came into my hands August 28th, 1894. Since April 12th, a period of four and one-half months, the plants had been either in press or in a bundle of porous papers, and yet they still showed some signs of life. Two joints were planted in the green house where they soon took root and grew so rapidly that in a very short time we had some 400 plants. Some of this material has been distributed to the leading botanical gardens in the United States. In this connection I might state that the Division of Botany, Department of Agriculture, will gladly send cuttings to any one who would like to grow the plant. It is, perhaps, of little horticultural value, although we have not experimented very much with it. It might be used in hanging baskets with good effect in connection with other plants having dense foliage, but its elongated internodes and short stiff leaves will prevent its use alone. The plant naturally grows close to the ground, rooting at every joint and forming quite a thick carpet. It might be used to advantage in clumps or masses. The flowers are produced in great abundance and though small are very pretty and quite persistent for this order. Although the flowers last but a single day, they remain open until late in the afternoon, and with little care plants will flower for several months. In no case have any of our plants set seed.

This *Tradescantia* is very unlike any of the other United States species. In habit it most resembles *T. floridana*, from which it is easily



distinguished by its flowers. It was originally described as having pale blue flowers, while in fact they are bright pink. The buds are sharply 3-angled and the anther cells are separated by a peculiar broad connective. I append a full description of the species.

Stems slender, rooting at the joints, flaccid, glabrous except a narrow line of pubescence extending down from the mouth of the sheath; joints sometimes elongated, 3.7<sup>cm</sup> long: leaves thickish, ovate to lanceolate, acute, 12 to 30<sup>mm</sup> long, keeled beneath and often somewhat reflexed, with slightly scabrous margins; sheath short, connate, with villous margin; spathe a pair of leaves (not connate as originally described) or occasionally of a single leaf: umbel always terminal and sessile, 6-flowered; bracts among the flowers 6<sup>mm</sup> long, green or purplish, linear, acute, bearing on their margins short stiff hairs: pedicels 12 to 16<sup>mm</sup> long: buds sharply triangular and acute: sepals 3, equal, greenish, 6<sup>mm</sup> long, keeled on the back and pubescent along the midvein: petals 3, bright pink (not "pale blue"), a little longer than the sepals, obovate to orbicular: stamens 6; filaments all bearded below; anther cells separated by a broad obtuse connective: style as long as the stamens, slightly capitate.—J. N. ROSE, *Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.*

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XX.—*Trdescantia micrantha* Torr. Fig. 1, bud; 2, cross section of same; 3, flower; 4, stamen; all somewhat enlarged. Drawn by Miss Mary C. Gannett.